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A SHORT REVIEW
OF
The Reports
OF THE
AFRICAN INSTITUTION,
AND OF THE
CONTROVERSY WITH DR. THORPE,
WITH
SOME REASONS
AGAINST
THE REGISTRY OF SLAVES
IN THE
British Colonies.

By GILBERT MATHISON, Esq.

SECOND EDITION,
WITH ADDITIONS AND NOTES.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the following pages had long felt an anxious desire to see the condition of the black population of our West India Islands brought into a gradual train of improvement ; and, with a view to the accomplishment of that important object, had, some years ago, endeavoured to contribute by the publication of a pamphlet, entitled “ Notices respecting Jamaica,” in which the subject was freely canvassed “ without favour to the enthusiasm or fear of the prejudices of any person,” and various methods pointed out, which, according to his view of the subject, might be mutually advantageous to master and slave. He did hope, sooner or later, to discover that he had thus laid the foundation of progressive good. He has now the satisfaction to think that his labours have not been misapplied ; and he has the confidence at the same time to

believe, that, if the spirit of his work had had more general and extensive influence, some part of the pretence, though no part of the motive, for a violent innovation might have been prevented.

He never will cease to afford his hearty co-operation, by all safe, rational, and constitutional methods; but he cannot silently allow his name to be coupled in any shape with a project, which, whatever may be the real motives for bringing it before Parliament, does nothing less than aim a deadly blow at the fundamental principles of the colonial system.

Whatever may be said of the *abstract right** of the legislative body of this kingdom to interpose in any form, or at any time, to shift its line of policy with respect to the colonies, or even to subvert the fabric raised with the sanction of successive administrations, during a course of one hundred and fifty years, he can safely deny the *moral right* of Parliament to interpose in this case, and as confidently deny the existence of a *true sterling feeling* in the attempt to accomplish

* See this subject very fairly discussed in Bryan Edwards's History of the West Indies, vol. ii, b. 6, p. 439.

the enfranchisement of the negro, *at any period*, by the disfranchisement of a most valuable body of British subjects, who have established themselves, under the encouragement of British Law, and the protection and security of a Constitutional Charter*, in the West India Islands, unaccompanied by a compensation in money for the loss of property, occasioned by such interposition†.

* See Edwards's History of the West Indies, vol. i, p. 215.

† The argument to this point is thus very ably handled by the powerful pen of Mr. Marryatt: "To vindicate slavery is not a task imposed on the British Planters, but on the British Legislature, by whom it was sanctioned and encouraged. In every country, the policy of the Government directs the conduct of the people. The West India Planters have only been the humble instruments of accomplishing the declared purpose of Parliament; and therefore cannot be justly reproached with having participated in the execution of this once favoured plan, for extending the commerce, and adding to the wealth and strength of the British Empire. If the principles of Parliament are now so much more pure, that the proscription of slavery is necessary, as a sacrifice at the altar of humanity, let them not heap obloquy on the West India Planters, but fix the odium where it is really due, and acknowledge, while they expiate, the sins of their predecessors. Let them remember, too, that one moral virtue is not to be trampled upon, that another may be exalted; and that those who pretend to be the votaries of humanity, must not be the violators of justice.

"The present race of British West India Proprietors can no more be charged with being friendly to the Slave Trade,

Sincere an advocate as he is for the diffusion of the blessings of civilized life and of rational freedom over the surface of the whole world, he is yet no citizen of the world in so extensive a sense as to wish to promote the happiness of other nations, either barbarous or civilized, by debasing the political condition of any class of British subjects, and the author of "*Reasons for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies*," has done him no more than justice in stating that

because they happen to be the owners of slaves, than any other members of the community. They either inherited this description of property from their ancestors, or have been under the necessity of taking it in satisfaction of debts, and from being mortgagees have unwillingly become proprietors. With what justice, then, can they be made the subjects of obloquy and reproach, for circumstances not of their own choice, nor within their power to control?

"Parliament can divest no men of property legally acquired, or inherited, without giving them a full indemnity. This is the law and the practice of these realms; and will continue so to be, as long as the rules of justice, or the rights of individuals, are respected. The British West India Planters purchased their slaves under the express sanction of the Legislature, and therefore hold them under the guarantee of the Nation; nor can Parliament, either in good faith, or common honesty, pass an act to emancipate the slaves, or even one which would irresistibly, though gradually, lead to their emancipation without paying for them." See *Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, &c. p. 213.

his views were disclosed "for a different practical purpose*."

He had nothing in view but the improvement of the condition of the negro, by *straight forward* means; by the fair operation of a principle, developed by the abedition law, which, when properly set in action, could not fail, as he conceived, to produce the most happy result, namely, the identity of interest, in a moral sense, between master and slave, by which the former must, by a sort of re-action, be benefited by every act of well-judged benevolence towards the slave, and the latter be gradually qualified by a course of moral, religious, and intellectual improvement, for a well-digested and rational freedom, which might at any time be conferred on him by the indulgence of his master for faithful conduct or valuable services: a most interesting and important contemplation, which, however interesting and important it may be, seems to fall very short of the "practical purpose" kept in view by the leading Directors of the African Institution.

In one sense it would be difficult to over-rate the public services of the body of dissenters of

* See Reasons for establishing a Registry, p. 17, Note.

different sects; for, by the successful efforts of their active zeal, they have, at last, awakened the slumbering zeal of the professional members of the established church, and, by an indirect operation as well as by positive charitable institutions, have given a most useful impulse to the work of moral and intellectual improvement among the lower orders of society throughout the United Kingdoms.

Whether the duty of religious instruction should be undertaken in the West India Islands by the ministers of the Church of England, or by missionary preachers, is a question which admits of an easy solution, and might be best answered by reverting to the old worn out arguments in favour of the established national church, which, happily for the interests of humanity, have long been set at rest. But there is one consideration, which must have a powerful influence on the minds of the colonial assemblies, and that is, a consideration of the duty of self-preservation as it regards both their lives and property.

Every minister of the established church is a known acknowledged character; his moral principles, his religious doctrines, his qualification in

every sense as a teacher of the Gospel, either are or may be known by the Bishop within whose jurisdiction the West India Islands lie. On the contrary, who is to define the character or qualifications of a missionary or itinerant preacher? He may or may not be a most benevolent personage, with the spirit of true charity diffused throughout his life and preachings; he may or may not be a contemptible hypocrite of the lowest class, with benevolence on his lips, and the blackest passions predominant in his heart; he may or may not be a visionary enthusiast, and, with the best intentions, though without common sense, ready to set fire, by his dangerous experiments, to the combustible materials collected in that corner of the world.

There cannot be a better or more powerful instrument than Christianity, in the hands of judicious reflecting ministers, for promoting the work of civilization wherever it may be required. Neither can there be a more mischievous instrument in the hands of designing demagogues, who, under the mask of extraordinary sanctity, may mean to disseminate the most poisonous political opinions. In this country such mischiefs find an easy antidote

in the good sense and positive intellectual condition of the mass of the people; but in the West India Islands, where the mass of the black population still continues in a state of the grossest ignorance, who can calculate the evil influence which may be obtained over their minds by the art and ingenuity of hypocritical incendiaries?

The necessity of discouraging undefined and indefinable itinerant preachers has been fully appreciated both in theory and from experience, by some of the colonial assemblies, and they have very properly attempted to discourage them by legislative enactments. These assemblies are of opinion that the Bishop of London, and not the missionary preacher, is the regular, and safe, and effectual channel for promoting christian knowledge; and they trust, no doubt, that the same energy, which has been roused in this kingdom, will soon extend itself for the dissemination of true Church of England doctrines and discipline among the slaves of the West India Islands. But if the views of the leading Directors of the African Institution are directed to an opposite "practical purpose," they not only differ, *toto cælo*, from the views of the Author of "Notices on Jamaica,"

(a point which, except as it regards himself, is of no possible signification) but will probably be disapproved of by the bench of Bishops and all *true* Church of England members of both Houses of Parliament*.

To clear the subject of some incumbrances, as well as to prevent any misapplication of his opinions, he has been led reluctantly to appear before the tribunal of the public in the shape, though with few, if any, of the necessary qualifications of a Reviewer, except impartiality and the love of truth.

* It must be obvious to every person that the duty of granting or withholding licences to the various preachers who offer themselves as the instructors of slaves in the West India Islands, is not only extremely important, but requires to be performed with the greatest delicacy and caution. The documents in the Appendix will shew how very low a description of persons have endeavoured to intrude themselves into the most sacred offices in the City of Kingston, in Jamaica, and what moderation and practical good sense has been manifested by the Corporation of that city, in the discharge of their important duties. See Appendix, A.

REVIEW, &c.

THERE is something so very repugnant to our nature in the idea of the slavery of the human species, that we could not fail to hail the Act for abolishing the Slave Trade as one of the most important benefits conferred by parliament on mankind within the range of our recollection; whether it be considered as a step to the immediate improvement or gradual enfranchisement of a very interesting class of fellow-creatures. It also was natural that we should view, with a corresponding degree of satisfaction, the establishment of an Association set on foot for the express purpose of bettering the condition of the people of Africa, who, for a long course of years, had been outraged

by a train of evils of no common magnitude. This might be some reparation for past enormities. The civilization of Africa had always been a leading point in the contemplation of the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company ; but, as long as the Slave Trade was authorised by law, all their efforts were paralyzed by it, and it naturally became the immediate care of the African Institution to exterminate every trace of a trade, which, as long as it should be carried on, in any shape or degree, must tend to cramp, if not to defeat, their meritorious endeavours to benefit the condition of the human race in this quarter of the globe.

The objects of this Association are comprised in certain resolutions agreed to and stated in their First Report, which we shall transcribe at length, as best exhibiting the principles which seemed to influence the leading persons employed in the formation of the establishment.

“ 1. That this Meeting is deeply impressed with a sense of the enormous wrongs which the natives of Africa have suffered in their intercourse with Europe ; and from

a desire to repair these wrongs, as well as from general feelings of benevolence, is anxious to adopt such measures as are best calculated to promote their civilization and happiness.

“ 2. That the approaching cessation of the Slave Trade hitherto carried on by Great Britain, America, and Denmark, will, in a considerable degree, remove the barrier, which has so long obstructed the natural course of improvement in Africa; and that the way will be thereby opened for introducing the comforts and arts of a more civilized state of society.

“ 3. That the happiest effects may be reasonably anticipated from diffusing useful knowledge and exciting industry among the inhabitants of Africa, and from obtaining and circulating throughout this country more ample and authentic information concerning the agricultural and commercial facilities of that vast continent; and that through the judicious prosecution of these benevolent endeavours, we may ultimately look forward to the establishment, in the room of that traffic by which Africa has

been so long degraded, of a legitimate and far more extended commerce, beneficial alike to the natives of Africa, and to the manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland.

“ 4. That the present period is eminently fitted for prosecuting these benevolent designs; since the suspension, during the war, of that large share of the Slave Trade, carried on by France, Spain, and Holland, will, when combined with the effect of the abolition laws of Great Britain, America, and Denmark, produce nearly the entire cessation of that traffic along a line of coast, extending between two and three thousand miles in length, and thereby afford a peculiarly favourable opportunity of giving a new direction to the industry and commerce of Africa.

“ 5. That, *for these purposes*, a Society be immediately formed, to be called ‘ *The African Institution.* ’ ”

The Report then very properly goes on, —“ To prevent misconception concerning the views and measures of the African Institution, it may be proper, in the first instance, to declare that it is the Society’s

fixed determination not to undertake any religious missions, nor to engage in commercial speculations.

“ It may also be proper to premise, that it will naturally become the duty and care of this Society to watch over the execution of the laws recently enacted in this and other countries, abolishing the African Slave Trade ; to endeavour to prevent the infraction of those laws ; and, from time to time, to suggest any means by which they may be rendered more effectual to their objects ; and likewise to endeavour, by communicating information, and by other appropriate methods, to promote the abolition of the Slave Trade by foreign powers.

“ The means which it is proposed to employ for the purpose of promoting civilization and improvement in Africa are of the following kind : —

“ 1. To collect and diffuse, throughout this country, accurate information respecting the natural productions of Africa, and, in general, respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African con-

continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political, condition of its inhabitants.

“ 2. To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connection with the natives of that continent.

“ 3. To endeavour to enlighten the minds of the Africans with respect to their true interests; and to diffuse information amongst them respecting the means whereby we may improve the present opportunity of substituting a beneficial commerce in place of the Slave Trade.

“ 4. To introduce among them such of the improvements and useful arts of Europe as are suited to their condition.

“ 5. To promote the cultivation of the African soil, not only by exciting and directing the industry of the natives, but by furnishing, where it may appear advantageous to do so, useful seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry.

“ 6. To introduce amongst the inhabitants beneficial medical discoveries.

“ 7. To obtain a knowledge of the principal languages in Africa, and, as has been

already found to be practicable, to reduce them to writing, with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country.

“ 8. To employ suitable agents, and to establish correspondencies as shall appear advisable, and to encourage and reward individual enterprise and exertion in promoting any of the purposes of the Institution.”

Under the confidence inspired by a long list of respectable names, large sums of money have been periodically collected ; and the Institution has carried on its measures from the year 1807 to the present time, without hindrance, without suspicion, with growing zeal, and unabated perseverance, always professing to aim at the attainment of a point, which was stated in their resolutions to be the improvements of the condition of the human race on the continent of Africa.

At last, however, their proceedings have been attacked by a gentleman, who, for some time, filled a high official situation in Sierra Leone, who was an eye-witness of

the state of affairs in that colony, who had opportunities of learning the history and transactions from the best authority, and whose testimony cannot be passed over unconsidered by us without great injustice (not to Dr. Thorpe, but) to the public, whose servants we profess to be, and whose cause Dr. Thorpe professes to advocate.

The merits and demerits of the African Institution are thus brought before the tribunal of the public. Dr. Thorpe has stood forward with no inconsiderable degree of hardihood as their accuser, or rather as the accuser of their *leading* members; he has arraigned the purity of their motives; he has denied the accuracy of their printed statements, and has raised strong grounds of doubt of the wisdom of trusting too confidently to private character for faithful management of the temporal affairs of the world.

We shall endeavour to sift this subject with impartiality, neither trusting to the assertions of the accuser, without a sufficient weight of evidence, nor, on the other hand, giving way too much to habi-

tual partiality towards respected individuals; always remembering that in large associations all will not be found equally pure; that ambition, commercial rivalry, political power, certain imaginary influences, either separable from or combined with benignant feelings, too often mislead mankind from the straight path of common sense and moral rectitude. These are considerations which always make us very cautious in bending too implicitly to the authority of mere names; and we confess we were not a little startled at seeing an appeal to such authority on the part of the respectable author of the *Special Report*, who ought to know that the *argumentum ad hominem* is always considered as one of the weakest of all arguments, and only fit to be employed by those who fail in plain sense and fair reasoning.

“The pamphlet of Dr. Thorpe,” says the *Special Report* (p. 3), “commences with an attack on the Court of Directors of the Sierra Leone Company, whose conduct, and even whose motives, he arraigns in the strongest and most unqualified terms.

In justice to that body, it may be proper to specify who were the individuals composing it. The Chairman and *leading member* of it from the first institution to its final dissolution was *Mr. Henry Thornton*, who is well known to have devoted a large portion of his time, and the powers of his active, discriminating, and upright mind to the superintendence of its concerns.

“The Deputy Chairmen were successively Philip Sandom, Esq. *Charles Grant*, Esq. now Chairman of the East India Company, and *Lord Teignmouth*, Sir Charles Middleton, afterwards Lord Barham ; Admiral Sir George Young, and *Thomas Clarkson*, Esq. were efficient Directors until they quitted London ; and the Hon. James Elliot, to the time of his death. Besides these, the following gentlemen were in the direction during *almost* the whole period of the Company’s existence : *W. Wilberforce*, Esq. M. P. *Thomas Babington*, Esq. M. P. *Thomas F. Forster*, Esq. Joseph Hardcastle, Esq. John Inglis, Esq. John Kingston, Esq. Samuel Parker, Esq. E. Parry, Esq. John Prinsep, Esq. and *Granville Sharpe*.

“The various statements which have been laid before Parliament, on the subject of Sierra Leone, were drawn up and sanctioned by these well-known and distinguished characters, whom it is unnecessary to defend from the imputation of either having practised a deception on the public, or of having been actuated by corrupt and improper motives.”

“The reports and statements of these individuals may be referred to as completely negating the charges and imputations of Mr. Thorpe; and as Mr. Thorpe did not visit the colony until three years and a half after the Company had ceased to govern it, and his residence there continued only for twenty-one months, namely, from July 1811, to March 1813; his testimony cannot be regarded as of much moment, *when thus opposed*. Whatever credit may be due to his testimony, when speaking of things within the sphere of his observation, yet of what passed during the Sierra Leone Company's administration of the colony, he could have no personal knowledge. His representations, therefore, loose and

vague as they are, can hardly be allowed to weigh materially against the *deliberate and recorded statements* of the gentlemen who have been named, themselves actors in the business, and possessing full access to every official document, and to the best sources of oral information."

And again (p. 57), "The Directors of the Sierra Leone Company," Mr. Thorpe states, on the surrender of the colony to government, "'formed (*to uphold their old influence*) a Society called the African Institution.' It will not be very easy for Mr. Thorpe to persuade the public that the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company, *whose names have been already mentioned*, could have any 'selfish' end in contributing to form the African Institution."

Now we do think that Dr. Thorpe must be a very stupid or a very indolent sort of man, if, during a residence of *twenty-one months*, filling, as he did, a high official situation, and living with the most intelligent individuals of a very small community, many of whom had been established in the colony from the earliest period, he

had not had access to authentic documents, and the best sources of oral information. We do not think the objection made, on the ground of a short residence, to the testimony of Dr. Thorpe can be allowed to have any weight when the authority of Governor Thompson is relied on in another place by the author of the Special Report, though he had only resided *eight months* in the colony. Dr. Thorpe himself says, " From January 1808, when I was appointed, I read every publication I could find either from the directors or respecting the conduct pursued by their servants. I endeavoured to acquire knowledge from every person I could reach, who had been in the colony; I examined into the state of the colony when I arrived; I interrogated the oldest and most intelligent settlers on every particular occurrence for eighteen years; searched the records of the Vice-Admiralty Court, and the file of affidavits; sought from the neighbouring chieftains, and the persons who had resided near the colony, every possible information, and heard the evidence given on oath in civil causes before myself."

In point of fact he has shewn himself to be intimately acquainted with the history and transactions of the colony from the earliest period : he has employed his knowledge, however acquired, to make some very important disclosures ; he has falsified some of the deliberate and recorded statements of his opponents, which could not have been accomplished without better materials and higher authority than the author of the Special Report is disposed to allow him to possess. Indeed, turning, as we do, from the perusal of a very important document, published in Dr. Thorpe's Appendix, of which he certainly has not made too much use, we are compelled to complain of a great want of candour in this attempt to throw discredit upon his authority.

With an equal degree of candour has the author of the Special Report denied the identity of the Sierra Leone Company with the African Institution. " In truth," he says, " the *only* Directors of that company, whose names are to be found in the list of the Directors of the African Institution, be-

sides those of the ever to be lamented *Mr. Henry Thornton* and *Mr. Granville Sharpe* are *Lord Teignmouth*, *Mr. Charles Grant*, *Mr. Wilberforce*, *Mr. Babington*, *Mr. J. F. Forster*, and *Mr. Clarkson*." " But these persons formed only a small proportion of the managing body, which consists of a president, twenty-two vice-presidents, a treasurer, and thirty-eight directors*. There was not, therefore, between the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company and the African Institution the *identity* which *Mr. Thorpe* affirms to have existed."

We cannot venture to affirm that there is a complete identity in point of names on the face of the list of directors. But when we see the old Board of Directors of the Sierra Leone Company embodied, excepting only a few insignificant names, with the Board of Directors of the African Institution; the chairman of the former, *Mr. H. Thornton*, becoming the treasurer of the latter; the late acting Governor of the colony under the old regime, *Mr. Macaulay*,

* See Appendix, B.

becoming the secretary of the new association here; the mild spirit and active talents of *Mr. Wilberforce*, accompanied by the same *select set* of individuals, *still* taking *the lead*, and very properly directing, as almost exclusively understanding, the affairs of Africa, we must be allowed to assume the fact of identity between the two establishments; notwithstanding the appearance of additional names in the list of Directors, and a long list of *pro formâ* Vice-Presidents, may satisfy the author of the Special Report that he commits no inaccuracy in denying it.

With as much shew of reason and with the same degree of candour might be denied the identity of the *Church Missionary Society* with the African Institution, though we have the authority of the most striking passage in the Special Report in affirmation of this identity; a passage which at once serves to disprove the strange assertion in page 57 of the Special Report, and to amalgamate, as it were, the whole of these associations.—“ Mr. Thorpe could hardly have been ignorant that in addition

to any attempts, which have been made by the African Institution in the work of direct instruction, attempts necessarily limited by the fundamental rule which prevented the employment of missionaries and by the low state of its funds, much has been attempted and even effected in this way by other societies, and particularly by the Church Missionary Society for missions to Africa and the East. Of this society, the very persons whom Mr. Thorpe most vehemently attacks as unfriendly to the interests of Africa, namely, the late chairman of the Sierra Leone Company, *Mr. Henry Thornton*, *Mr. Wilberforce*, and *Mr. Macaulay*, it appears, were among the founders; and from its institution in 1800 they have also been among its most strenuous supporters as well as *most active managers; besides whom, twelve noblemen and gentlemen are managers alike of both institutions.*"

We do not mean to enter minutely into the transactions of the Sierra Leone Company, nor into the controversy between Dr. Thorpe and his opponents; in which we find, as we generally find in other

similar cases, too much irrelevant personality as well as too much assertion without evidence on both sides. We shall therefore confine our strictures to main points, referring the reader for further information to the several publications, which are now the subject of our consideration, and which, notwithstanding a certain air of contempt very carefully thrown upon the character of Dr. Thorpe, are well worthy of the most serious and attentive perusal of impartial readers.

Having denied the identity with, the Directors of the African Institution proceed to defend the measures of, the Sierra Leone Company; and, whatever may be said of the conduct of subordinate agents during the progress of the settlement, we sincerely agree in expressing a deep impression of the laudable and disinterested views which *first* led to the formation of it. We cannot, however, pass many encomiums on the practical good sense displayed by the Directors in the attempt to rear this child of experiment; the failure will afford the best criterion of their merit, which is attri-

butable, it is said, to the following causes, all of which a little sagacity might have foreseen, and most of which a little common sense might have corrected:

1. The want of sufficient power and authority in the government of the colony during the first *eight years*.

2. The unfavourable character of the settlers.

3. The insufficiency of its force to check the natives.

4. The unhealthiness incident to all new settlements in tropical climates.

5. The inexperience of the conductors of the undertaking in the earlier period of the settlement.

6. The long continuance of the war.

7. The Slave Trade.

These are the causes enumerated by the author of the Special Report to account for the failure of this colony; to which we shall add a few more causes, less insisted upon, but more powerfully operating, collected by us from the same authority.

1. The establishment of a settlement in the midst of savage nations, *without forts*

for its protection. Hence the colony was frequently threatened, and twice actually attacked by the natives; hence the audacity of the African chiefs, who, when cultivation flourished, first drew away the native labourers, and then drove the settlers from their farms; hence a free scope for the exercise of the policy of the natives, who kept the colony in a state of disquietude and alarm.

2. The peculiar *unfitness* of the main body of the people to persevere, under the difficulties of a new settlement.

3. *Bad faith in the distribution of land to the Nova Sootians*; hence insurrections and continued turbulence.

4. *Ignorance of the peculiar features of the negro character.*

5. The extreme *indolence of the settlers*, which afforded an insuperable barrier to the successful cultivation of the land.

This statement needs no commentary: for a grosser case of incapacity, mismanagement, and ignorance, was never yet inferred from a bare exposition of facts; which, if rightly appreciated, might afford,

one would think, a pregnant lesson of caution in allowing the same set of persons, under whatever denomination, to meddle with the internal administration of affairs in any other well-established colony.

As the charge, however, of bad faith towards the Nova Scotians is denied, *totidem verbis*, by the Directors of the African Institution, we feel it an incumbent duty to enter more particularly into that question. —“ Mr. Thorpe,” says the Special Report, “ charges the Sierra Leone Company with failing in their engagements to the Nova Scotian settlers.”

The facts of the case seem to be these: To encourage these persons to transfer themselves from Nova Scotia to this infant colony, Mr. Clarkson in 1792, had promised *twenty* acres of land to each man, *ten* acres to each woman, and *five* acres to each child. With the just expectation of receiving this allotment of territory, they were landed at Sierra Leone and received *one-fifth part*, and no more, of the promised allotment; and this, according to

the modest expostulation of the Nova Scotians, in their petition to the directors, was not "*good land*." "The settlers remonstrated in vain," says Mr. Thorpe, "then ensued an insurrection." This was the natural and more immediate effect. Then the negro, no doubt, became distrustful, indifferent, and sulky; this was the natural and durably-mischievous effect. "The remaining *four-fifths* have been repeatedly offered," says the Special Report, "but the offer has been, for obvious reasons*, generally declined." "The *right*, however, to the remaining four-fifths of the quantity of land originally promised, was carefully preserved to the Nova Scotians. *This was stipulated for* by the *Sierra Leone Company*, and agreed to by His Majesty's Government, when the transfer of the colony to the crown was negociated." This they stipulated for at the expiration of *sixteen years*! The Special Report says, "Not above three or four applications grounded upon it appear to have been made to the co-

* These reasons should be explained.

lonial government.”—Page 15. Dr. Thorpe says, “Almost every surviving Nova Scotian, his wife or children, did apply even before they had sufficient dollars to pay the fees for obtaining the grant.”—Thorpe’s Reply, p. 9. It would be difficult to decide between these contradictory statements: but these questions, we conceive, might be fairly asked: Did not the whole of the Nova Scotians apply by petition at the time the land was most wanted? and was not the petition rejected? “Yet,” they say, “for this charge there does not appear to be any just foundation; on the contrary, the Company appears to have acted with a *scrupulous* attention to their engagements to this body of people”!!

On this point, we conceive Dr. Thorpe has stated a clear unanswerable charge of *bad faith* against the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company; and we believe we know enough of the negro character to be justified in pronouncing that this fatal error, committed at the first establishment, must have become a prevailing cause of their ill

success during the whole of their administration of the colony.

“The most serious, however,” says the Special Report, “of all Dr. Thorpe’s accusations against the Sierra Leone Company and their agents, is that of Slave Trading. But, in proportion to its seriousness, it appears to have, if possible, still less foundation whereon to rest than any that has yet been adverted to.”

A most serious accusation most certainly this is; an accusation of offence so enormous as to have required the greatest degree of delicacy and caution on the part of the accuser, and the completest and most unequivocal refutation on the part of the accused. Yet Dr. Thorpe has introduced it with a flippancy and conciseness very little suited to the heinousness of the offence; and has drawn an inference to the discredit of the *directors*, which, we conceive, is by no means borne out, nor even justified, by the circumstances of the case, as stated in the letter to Mr. Wilberforce. But, as the developement of this passage in

the transactions of the colony may afford a lesson of great practical utility to those who may be called upon to support or to control the enterprises of the leading Members of the African Institution, we feel a double motive for dwelling more particularly on this section of the controversy.

“ Lastly,” says Dr. Thorpe (p. 5), “ *their servants constantly purchased the natives; worked them themselves without pay, and hired them to others for pay; suffered slaves to be brought in and taken out of the colony; allowed them to be seized and delivered to their masters when they sought protection; permitted their store-keepers to supply the slave factories, slave ships, and to feed the trade in every possible way. Even in Mr. Ludlam’s last administration of the government, two cargoes of slaves, taken from the Americans, were publicly sold at twenty dollars a head. So much for their efforts to repress the Slave Trade, of which they had professed such an abhorrence, and which the Act of Parliament for incorporating the Company forbade them to pursue. Is it possible the*

directors did not know, hear, or believe, this, or any part of it? If disapprobation had attached to such conduct, is it probable they would continue in their confidence, after they had heard of it, the persons who managed their concerns? or did they imagine that by trumpeting their abhorrence of this diabolical traffic, fulminating against every person implicated in it, and blazoning the virtues of those who seemed anxious to exterminate it, they would prevent their transactions from being divulged; or, if revealed, they could induce this nation to discredit any authority that might dare to give them utterance?"

There is certainly too much violence and great bad taste displayed in this language of Dr. Thorpe, which is more calculated to withdraw the reader from the important points of his statement than to fix his attention on them. The facts, however, of a *purchase* of slaves, of letting them out for hire, &c. are too peremptorily stated by Dr. Thorpe to be easily passed over by us. They are not denied, in a direct manner, by the author of the *Special Report*, but so met

by a long train of weak inconclusive reasoning as to fail completely in impressing conviction on our minds ; while Dr. Thorpe, in *his Reply*, has, very fairly, produced several cases, upon the strength of which he had ventured to make so serious an attack ; and which, if these cases were insufficient, are corroborated, as far as the question of *purchase* goes, by the indirect acknowledgment of Governor Ludlam himself.—*Sp. Rep.* p. 53.

These cases might more fairly have been stated by Dr. Thorpe in his Letter to Mr. Wilberforce. However, as he thought fit to prefer a general charge, the directors were left to guess at the specific case on which they conceived he presumed to found his accusations ; in doing which they have furnished us with the important disclosure of the case of the American Captain Bradford, which will be stated in its due place.

The cases relied upon by Dr. Thorpe, as stated in his Reply, appear to be these:—

“ In the action brought by Campbell against the Company,” says Dr. Thorpe, “ tried before myself, it was proved that

the Company's servants purchased slaves, and hired them for work; that settlers brought slaves into the colony, and took them away; that slaves, who fled to the colony for protection, were delivered up to their masters, and even to slave ships. I read the notes of this trial before a Committee of the African Institution, and will publish them, if the directors desire it.

“ I have read the affidavit of Jesse Porter and Thomas Gudgeon, charging Messrs. Ludlam and Dawes with a knowledge of slaves being sold in the colony. I have also read some of the Arabic letters from the chiefs on the coast to our venerated king, charging the Company's servants with dealing in slaves.

“ The Report, in various places, admits the purchasing of natives; the working of them followed of course; they were not procured for ornament; and James Reid, on oath, stated in court that the Company hired out their slaves; that he had paid their accomptant four dollars a month for the labour of some whom he had hired himself.

“ A Mr. Cooper went into the Soosoo country, purchased eleven natives, and brought them into Sierra Leone; in his absence they were refractory to his wife, and she was allowed to send them to a neighbouring factory to be sold!! Slaves who made their escape from neighbouring factories, were, on application, delivered up to their masters by the Governor, and even before application, they were sent to gaol until applied for; some slaves, that escaped from Bance Island, were seized, flogged, and sent back by the Governor. Slaves also, who swam to shore from slave ships in the river, were seized by the civil power in their famous Free Town, and remanded to their fetters. A noted slave captain, of the name of Brown, recovered some slaves, who had escaped from him, while lying in the river. Tobias, a blacksmith, now in Sierra Leone, having escaped from a slave ship, was seized by the Governor's order, and thrown into prison; but effecting his escape also from thence, he concealed himself in the mountains until his persecutors had sailed away, and he is at present in the colony, a very use-

ful settler."—See *Thorpe's Reply*, p. 24, *et seq.*

Analogous to slave-trading is the plan of *redeeming natives*, as it is technically called, by converting them into *indented servants*, which we must consider, notwithstanding a gloss laboriously attempted to be thrown upon the practice, as nothing less than a sly pretence for evading the conditions of the charter, and deriving all the advantages, without incurring any of the odium, attached to the name of slavery. The following cases will afford an appropriate illustration :

In November 1807, an American slave-captain, of the name of Bradford, attempted, in the river Sierra Leone, to kidnap eleven natives. He succeeded in securing five. Dreading the vengeance of the natives, Captain Bradford instantly took refuge in the harbour of Sierra Leone, intending to sail the next tide. The native chiefs, however, reached the colony in time to put it in Governor Ludlam's power to call the ruffian to account. All that Governor Ludlam felt that he could properly do, was, to require the captain to make

satisfaction, or abandon him and his vessel to the retaliation of the natives. The Captain agreed to the former alternative. The five kidnapped negroes were instantly set at liberty. About two hundred pounds worth of goods was delivered to the injured natives; besides which, *ten* of his slaves were taken out of his vessel, and *landed in the colony*. Of these *ten* slaves, *four* were *unconditionally* liberated, partly because they were in a diseased state, and partly owing to peculiar circumstances which are not stated. The remaining *six* were bound to colonists, as apprentices, for fourteen years. A hundred dollars, as an apprentice-fee, that being also the customary value of slaves, was paid *to the native chiefs*, which, according to their own laws, they were compellable to receive instead of the persons of the slaves.—*Special Rep. p. 42, et seq.*

Two American ships, with a hundred and sixty-seven slaves on board, were taken by His Majesty's ship *Derwent*, Captain Parker, and carried into Sierra Leone. This happened in March or April 1808. No

Vice-Admiralty Court had yet been instituted, nor had the Orders in Council, respecting captured negroes, reached the colony. But, these slaves having been brought to Free Town, it became necessary for Governor Ludlam to provide for them, even though they had not been "*condemned to His Majesty's use.*" Forty of them were, therefore, taken into the service of government under the *promise* of liberty at the end of three years. Eighteen men, fourteen women, and ninety-five children were bound apprentices for different terms, according to their respective ages, each person, *receiving* apprentices, paying *twenty dollars* for each. The money, thus paid, was distributed among the captors.

We cannot follow Dr. Thorpe in his invectives against Governor Ludlam for his conduct on this occasion. It was a novel case: he probably *meant* well, but, in our opinion, he acted very wrong. Mr. Macaulay says, "The twenty dollars ought not to have been given to the captors. It ought to have formed a fund for the benefit of the negroes themselves. It *tells* ill, because it

looks something like a sale." As little do we concur in the narrow views of Mr. Macaulay, who seems to have had no very strong objections to slavery, if confined to Sierra Leone, nor to the Slave Trade, if concealed under the *idea* of redeeming natives from slavery. The fault of Governor Ludlam, according to our view of the subject, was this, that he did not act with the true spirit of an abolitionist. If he chose to exercise a necessary discretion in disposing of these slaves before or without condemnation, he ought to have used the same discretion in rescuing them from the fetters provided for them by the narrow provisions of the Act of Parliament, which seem to have been made more for the colony of Sierra Leone, than for the benefit of the natives of Africa.

If Governor Ludlam had been a true abolitionist, what in fact he was not, but which, as Governor of Sierra Leone, he ought to have been, he would, both in this case, and in that of the American Captain Bradford, have acted, or endeavoured to act, according to the views of Governor Colum-

bere and Mr. Dawes, who, in 1810, wrote as follows: "Some of these slave ships (the captured slave ships, see Special Report, p. 72), had not yet received their slaves on board; but their capture had nevertheless deprived the slave-dealers of the means of carrying off about two thousand eight hundred Africans; and, out of other captures, four hundred and seventy-one men, one hundred and ninety-five women, and four hundred and twenty-one children, have been released from slavery.

"A considerable number of the nearest and dearest kindred, husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, who had been kidnapped or stolen at various times, and put on board different vessels, have been unexpectedly restored to each other at Sierra Leone; and whenever any of them have desired to return to their own country, and such return has been deemed practicable, they have been allowed to do so; being first provided with a paper under the hand and seal of the Governor, certifying that they are to be considered as his people, and under his protection,

which is looked upon, according to the custom and law of Africa, to be a sufficient security against further molestation."

This passage sufficiently disproves the assertion of Dr. Thorpe, that no efforts were ever made to restore the negroes to their connections and country; but it, at the same time, points out a very practicable mode, by which Governor Ludlam, if he had chosen to do so, might have disposed of the ten negroes taken from Bradford, if not of the hundred and sixty-seven taken by His Majesty's ship *Derwent*. In the same way that four were liberated, ten or more might have been liberated, *unconditionally*. A hundred dollars was the price paid as an apprentice fee, not by the party indented, as in common cases, but, by the party receiving the indentures. What right the natives had to claim the money in this case, we are at a loss to understand. The kidnapped slaves, all that they had a right to, were released. Whatever they got beyond that was gratuitous; and, as far as Bradford's slaves were concerned, ought not to have been given, because it ought

not to have been received by Governor Ludlam as the price of liberty, or, as Mr. Macaulay would express it, as "the price of blood."

The secret object of Governor Ludlam, in this case, most probably was to get an increase of valuable settlers; but, whatever were his real views, the case is fairly brought, by the circumstances of it, within the definition of a purchase and sale. It is truly a slave trade under specious but false pretences, quite at variance with the professed principles of the Company, virtually illegal, wrong in practice, and mischievous as a precedent; a precedent which no doubt governed the proceedings of Governor Ludlam, a few months afterwards, in the affair of the hundred and sixty-seven slaves taken from the Americans by His Majesty's ship *Derwent*, and is probably derivable from the same source as the clauses we have already adverted to, which disfigure, not a little, the Abolition Act.

But the merits of the question, in the case of the hundred and sixty-seven slaves,

is so well handled by Dr. Thorpe, that we should do an act of injustice to him, as well as to the subject, not to state his argument in his own words:—"Purchasing slaves, when practised by the Company," says he, "is termed '*redeeming natives*' of Africa from slavery, who were bound to the purchasers for a limited time. I know not how many of these were bound, but I was in the colony twenty years after the Company commenced, and I never heard of a single individual who was liberated after serving his apprenticeship. I will examine this *redemption of the natives*, which Mr. Ludlam and Mr. Macaulay acknowledge was a speculative error. 'The slave is brought to Sierra Leone, not sent to the West Indies; for every market there must be a seller and a buyer; when the purchase is made, does it injure or benefit the market to have the merchandize carried to an adjacent or a distant part? Though school-boys would laugh at such a pitiful subterfuge, it is gravely delivered (under the sanction of great names) as a vindication of the charge of Slave Trading;"—and again,

speaking of the one hundred and sixty-seven slaves captured in the American ships by His Majesty's ship *Derwent*, he says, "They affirm that the slaves were not sold. —I may be mistaken, but the slaves were driven to a public market, they were publicly cried for sale through Free Town, by the public crier, they were exposed at a public auction, there was a seller and a buyer, and a price paid. The article purchased was delivered, and carried away ;—yet this was no sale* ! Mr. Rylander, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Vannick, were offered some, but declared they would not buy slaves. Mrs. Forbes purchased two, and on leaving the colony she asked Governor Ludlam whether she might sell them ? He answered, ' she might ! ' and accordingly she did sell them again, for the same price, *twenty dollars*† each, which was about the

* These particulars are not stated in the account given of this transaction in the Special Report.

† There seems to be an error in the sum mentioned as the price of slaves on the coast, either here or in a preceding passage ; but, as the argument is not materially affected by it, the sum stated is allowed to stand.

price of such slaves on the adjacent rivers." Mr. Ludlam, in the letter published as his, writes, (p, 53, Sp. Rep.) ' I do not urge all this as meaning to contend that slaves were never allowed to be *purchased*, or, as I must call it, *redeemed*, in this colony; but I contend these were neither purchased nor redeemed.' " Now, I can prove," says Dr. Thorpe, " by testimony of those who were present at the time, that there never was a more complete sale of slaves in the West Indies, though I cannot speak of the manner in which, according to Governor Ludlam, they purchased or redeemed slaves before in the colony. It is obvious Governor Ludlam might have distributed these slaves as he thought fit, and it is also well known that any person obtained the slaves who bid and paid for them."

But we certainly do not see enough to fix upon the *directors* the foul stain of participating in these acts of outrage upon the fundamental laws of their establishment. We do think it possible that they did not know, hear of, or believe, the facts stated by Dr. Thorpe, or any part of them,

We do think it probable that, knowing and disapproving of the conduct of their servants, they might still have felt extreme difficulty in applying an immediate or effectual remedy. We do even think that they *might* be justified, on the ground of necessity and good policy, in continuing persons in their official situations, who had forfeited their confidence by the commission of such acts as are here charged upon them by Dr. Thorpe. We do think that they might conscientiously trumpet forth their abhorrence of the diabolical traffic, without meaning to make their anathemas a cloak to conceal their own transactions; and, if Dr. Thorpe were to depend exclusively on these or similar insinuations, we conceive he would soon lose all credit in the contemplation of every rational and dispassionate inquirer into the circumstances of the case.

But, if Dr. Thorpe has, on his part, taken pains to implicate the *directors* in the conduct of their *servants*, the author of the Special Report, on his part, does not appear to take much pains to separate

them. He seems carefully to avoid the disjunctive, and, animated by a blind zeal, advocates, indiscriminately, the cause of master and servants, thus unnecessarily confounding the conduct of a set of selfish, profligate, worthless settlers in the colony, with that of the easy, well-meaning, disinterested part of their constituents in this country.

Still is the charge of Slave Trading insisted upon, and, according to our apprehension, completely made out as existing within the colony. The cases stated in the Special Report we are not at liberty to doubt, though we have taken the liberty of passing our own commentaries on them. The facts insisted on by Dr. Thorpe may appear to be accurately or inaccurately stated, according to the peculiar bias or predisposition of mind of the reader. For our parts we believe them to be substantially true, not because they are given on the authority of Dr. Thorpe, but, because we conceive these and similar cases would necessarily arise from the nature and situation of the colony, from the bad character

of many of the settlers, from the imbecility of the government, from the extreme indolence of the free cultivators, whose indisposition to work is said to have been the grand impediment, which from first to last obstructed the views of the Company and of their agents with respect to the cultivation of the land, and which is stated to have been so strong, that if any other mode of subsistence, requiring less bodily exertion, could be found, the pursuit of agriculture was infallibly neglected. Hence the strong inducement to commit the transgressions enumerated by Dr. Thorpe; hence the perception of a necessity to cultivate the land by labourers, who, whether in the character of slaves or indented servants, might be *compelled* to work; hence a clandestine Slave Trade; hence the plan of *redeeming natives*, without any reference to their own free choice, from a state of slavery, by placing them in a state of servitude.

With such a glaring demonstration, furnished by their own colony, of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of culti-

vating the land in these tropical climates by free labourers*, what can be meant by the Directors of the African Institution, by pushing forward the project of cultivating our West India Islands by free negroes; towards the accomplishment of which the clandestine Slave Trade is employed as a pretence, and the Slave Registry Bill, if ever it pass into a law, is meant to be employed as a stepping stone?

But it is time that we should revert to the proceedings of the African Institution.

* Whatever speculative opinions we may hold as to the practicability of cultivating the West India Islands by Chinese, or other free labourers, under circumstances favourable to the exercise of the physical energies of mind and body; our opinions, we confess, are by no means strengthened by our researches into the history of the experimental colony of Sierra Leone.

We are, however, by no means disposed to abandon a favorite theory: we merely wish to waive the discussion of its merits at an unfit season; and, in a case of such difficulty under the present circumstances of the islands, to deprecate the interference of strangers, who, having already ruined themselves, are blindly going on, or wishing to go on, with experiments, at the risk of ruin to others, and in defiance of the plainest dictates of their own actual experience.

We have already stated the resolutions as forming the basis of their new establishment. We entirely agree with the Committee that there was nothing in the history of the Sierra Leone Company to discourage the efforts of the African Institution, while acting on the plan proposed in their Resolutions, and stated in their First Report. They had failed in trade, and profiting by experience, they determined not to engage in commercial speculations. They had been unsuccessful in disseminating christian knowledge, and accordingly determined not to undertake any religious missions. They also meant, no doubt, by excluding trade and religious missions from their scheme, to conciliate the good-will and meet the objections of a numerous set of persons, who might otherwise be disinclined to support the labours of the Institution. Civilization had not been much promoted by the help of languages, by arts, by agriculture, or example ; yet the continued efforts to establish this vital principal, or first necessary step to human happiness, must always be deserving of praise, and might possibly

be rewarded by success. They had had abundant proof, as they conceived, of the hindrance thrown by the Slave Trade in the way of every effort to better the condition of Africa, and this they determined to attack in every shape and by every contrivance. For this they were well-qualified by experience, by opportunities of gaining information, by influence, by patronage, by the weight of money. This was the main and immediate object pointed at by their Resolutions; for, by the subversion of the Slave Trade alone, it was thought, could the ultimate object of admitting the inhabitants of the great continent of Africa to the blessings of civilized life, and of redeeming it from heathen darkness, be ever expected to be effectually accomplished.

Proposing to act upon a plan so pure, so liberal, so entirely unexceptionable in principle, so noble in its end, the directors could not fail to receive the warmest support in money, in hand and in heart, of every genuine friend of the human race; nor could the voice of calumny have reached them, nor scepticism dared to call in ques-

tion the rectitude of their motives, while faithfully discharging the duties of this generous, this most important, and arduous undertaking.

Up to the Fifth Annual Report, this seems to have been the exclusive object; other points, however, are incidentally, or, as we conceive *artfully*, introduced, to lead the mind of the public easily and gradually to objects not immediately within the professed duties of the African Institution, as expressed in their resolutions. "The *system of free labour* (Rep. 2) being already established" (with what success and under what circumstances, we have already seen) "at Sierra Leone, the introduction of any number of negroes into that colony, whether on the footing of free labourers or as apprentices for a limited time, could be attended with none of those inconveniences which, it is alleged, would flow from it in our West India Islands, and which, as the Committee understand, are deemed to be so considerable, as to make it a question whether many of the persons *already liberated* in the West Indies, under the opera-

tion of the Abolition Act, shall not be sent back to Sierra Leone*.

Then (in Rep. 5) the case of Huggins is mentioned, a case which certainly stands in no need of the aid of misrepresentation ; for a story more calculated to excite the feelings, and to mislead the judgment could

* The consideration of this passage affords two distinct ideas, that of the positive practice of cultivating the soil by free labourers, and that of making the West India Islands a recruiting ground for free labourers for the service of Sierra Leone. We will not charge the African Institution with any deep laid schemes, as developed by this passage in the Second Report; we merely observe, that the value of the first idea is negatived by their own experience, and the idea itself is only useful as leading the mind of the reader easily to their further plans. The second idea may, contrary to the meaning of the directors, afford a hint to speculative abolitionists, to reciprocate the advantages of the plan by drawing indented servants from the coast of Africa (which, as true abolitionists, we earnestly hope will never be attempted) for the cultivation of their plantations in the West Indies; an operation, which, if fairly estimated, might be considered as not less beneficial to them than that by which they are placed in a state of virtual slavery at Sierra Leone.

not easily be imagined. This horrid case, which we shall not defile our pages by repeating, together with that of Hodges, mentioned in Rep. 6, though glaring exceptions to the rule of practice, and not less reprobated in the West Indies than they must be in every other part of the civilized world, are quoted as "*serving to exemplify the nature of the bondage into which it is the object of the Institution to prevent the negroes of Africa from being reduced.*" God knows, there is enough in the condition of slavery, in its best state, to excite our sympathy, and too much, in the established system, which calls urgently for the hand of correction. There is no need whatever of the aid of high colouring to give effect to the living picture. Not less than the Directors of the African Institution have we been struck with the horrid circumstances of these cases; we have thought much, we have inquired, we have heard, we have seen, and we have no hesitation to pronounce distinctly, that, if the directors mean to hold up these cases as a fair specimen of the general practice, or as

any thing more than strong instances of individual tyranny, cruelty, and oppression, they are either disqualified by ignorance of the real state of things and of society in our West India Islands for the delicate and difficult enterprizes they *now* seem determined to accomplish, or have deliberately put a false inference on the record of their proceedings.

These cases, however, such as they are, serve very appositely as a convenient link in the chain of their proceedings. "The directors (Rep. 6, p. 14) have adverted to this subject, not for the purpose of entering *at present* into any explanation of *their views upon it*, but merely that the members of the Institution may understand that it is one which occupies much of their attention." "The directors believe that the necessity of a *reform in the administration* of our West India colonies is strongly felt, not only by the public, but *by many persons connected with these islands*, who can no longer shut their eyes to the *consequences* of the system which has been established there."

We consider this as one of the most *artful* passages to be found in the Reports of the African Institution, designedly contrived to impress the belief that the planters themselves are tremblingly alive to the danger of their actual situation ; and most unwarrantably attempting to make them falsify the very strongest ground upon which all respectable, humane, liberal, enlightened proprietors of West India property have invariably deprecated the interposition of strangers in the internal administration of their affairs, namely, the dread of revolution following upon the heels of reform ; a dread too well justified by a contemplation of the horrors inflicted on St. Domingo by the mad measures of the French National Assembly, acting under the influence of the Amis des Noirs, and now, if any thing, kept alive in the minds of the planters, not by a consideration of the effects of their own vicious system, but by the growing influence and overt acts of the African Institution.

“ To such a length have abuses in this (Nevis) and some other West India

Islands proceeded, that several intelligent planters have not scrupled to state their unqualified opinion, that a *reform in the administration* of those colonies is absolutely necessary; and some have gone so far as to suggest plans for improvement. Among these plans is that of the establishment of a *registry* of all the slaves in *each* of the colonies in which a slave population exists; and to the expediency of this measure the *directors* are disposed to give their most unqualified assent!"—See Rep. 7, p. 16.

Now, because abuses have been committed in *the* little island of Nevis, a registry of slaves is proposed to be established in *each* of our West India colonies, without their consent, and in violation of their constitutional privileges, not, as pretended in another place, for the purpose of controlling a contraband Slave Trade, which in point of fact does not exist, but for the more determined purpose of introducing a *reform* into the *internal system* throughout our islands!

“To the latter communication (from the Bahamas) they feel particularly indebted

for some valuable hints relative to the amendment of the laws; particularly the law of evidence respecting slaves in the West Indies."—Rep. 7, p. 20.

Then comes, Rep. 8, p. 11—"The Board have still to lament the continuance of flagrant abuses in several of the West India Islands. They have long been impressed with the extreme importance of the subject; and the means of removing the great evils still existing in the West India system, and ameliorating the condition of those unhappy beings, who are now suffering under its weight, have long been under their serious consideration." "The directors, however, trust that, even during the present session, the attention of Parliament will be drawn to measures tending ultimately to ameliorate the state of the black and coloured population of the West India Islands."

Here then is another step from the *black* population, or slaves, to that of the coloured or *free people* of the islands! Where, we would ask, is this to stop?

Then follows the recommendation of a

registry of slaves; upon the strength of which a bill has since been brought into Parliament by Mr. Wilberforce, and supported by the pen of Mr. Stephen.

We do not mean to enter much into the merits or demerits of this measure; they will, no doubt, be fairly tried by Parliament, and the question agitated without any degree of that intemperance which distinguishes the pamphlet of Mr. Stephen. It is enough for our purpose, in this place, to have traced the indirect object of it through the unauthorised proceedings of the Directors of the African Institution; and to have drawn the attention of the mass of subscribers of that establishment to a measure, which tends to implicate them in a dreadful responsibility, and to throw a most inordinate degree of power into the hands of a certain class of individuals, who have been, and now are equally, the leading members of the Sierra Leone Company, the Church Missionary Society, and the African Institution.

Each of these Associations has, we are ready to acknowledge, conferred by its

labours very important benefits on mankind in various ways. We have no desire to quarrel with, or to call in question, the purity of their motives; but we do not wish to see them entrusted with too much *power*. They have glaringly mismanaged their own affairs at Sierra Leone; they have ascertained, by experiment, that the soil in tropical climates is not to be successfully and properly cultivated by free labourers; civilization has made but feeble progress under their encouragement; their speculations have been followed by bankruptcy and disappointment. Are these then fit persons to be allowed to meddle with the legitimate authorities of our prosperous possessions in the West Indies? Most assuredly not. As little are East India directors and merchants trading to the coast of Africa, fit persons to direct the affairs of these rival colonies, with a view to their happiness and prosperity. As to moral and religious instruction, surely the Bishop of London, and the regular clergy, acting under his authority, are the fittest persons to discharge these important duties. Our

colonial assemblies, and particularly that of Jamaica, have invariably presented a firm resistance to the encroaching spirit of Methodists and Seceders, and we trust they never will fail, within the limits of their jurisdiction, to support the established hierarchy of the mother country, in spite of every menace, and in the face of every danger. And as the "good humoured and complying" temper of our ministers seem to have encouraged the Directors of the African Institution to believe that "*Government,*" to employ the words of the Secretary of this Institution, "*will be disposed to adopt almost any plan which we may propose to them with respect to Africa, provided we save them the trouble of thinking,*" let them now be disabused and made at last to understand that such is not the case with respect to our West India Islands, notwithstanding the phalanx which may be brought to support their enterprises on all occasions.

But, though we have trespassed too long on the patience of our readers, we cannot altogether pass by the Registry Bill and

Mr. Stephen's pamphlet without some short observations. They afford, indeed, a subject most important and deserving of very serious consideration in a commercial, moral, and constitutional point of view, as affecting the prosperity of our sugar islands; the *true* happiness of a large body of fellow-creatures, who may be benefited or made miserable by the operation of the measure, and the growing influence of a club or association of persons out of Parliament over the proceedings of the legislative bodies of the kingdom.

The consideration of these questions would evidently lead us into too wide a field. Nor shall we stop to consider the question of the *right* of Parliament to enact laws for the internal regulation of our several colonies in cases where they have, from the earliest periods, enjoyed the exclusive privilege of legislating for themselves. It is enough to admit that Parliament has the *power*, to leave ourselves free to consider merely the *wisdom*, of making a beginning of this sort of interference in the case before us.

All travellers describe their surprise at first landing in the new world. Humbolt speaks of this in a very lively manner. The imagination is left far behind, when the strange and agreeable appearance of every object strikes upon the senses. Every thing is new ; every creature, every shrub, the formation of the mountains, and the meanest reptile, convey the idea of a separate creation. No words can give an adequate representation of the actual appearance and state of things. Nature, in these regions, delights in extremes. The heat of the sun is intense ; if it rain, the drops fall down in masses, and, forming torrents, rush impetuously from the mountains, and, alas ! too frequently, sweep away every thing before them. Throughout there is a degree of combustibility which requires the most careful watchfulness ; the smallest spark is immediately kindled into a flame ; the flame, fanned by the never-failing breeze, soon rages uncontrolled, and every fabric within its reach is soon levelled with the dust. This is no exaggerated picture ; it is the natural state of things, and the artificial will neces-

sarily be influenced by it; the mind, the passions, the senses, the regulations of society, the wants, the abundance, and all the various circumstances attending the animated part, acknowledge the peculiar structure and features of the material part of the creation in this new hemisphere. To Europeans the whole *thing* is inconceivable; and if these considerations afford a lesson of caution to legislators how they begin, it will at the same time teach them how difficult it is to know where to stop, the work of making laws for the regulation of these distant regions of the world.

Such characteristic features, one may be allowed to suppose, could not have escaped the notice of those persons who, for many years, have, it may be said professionally, studied the state of society and the nature of things in the West India Islands; yet have the leading members of the African Institution, with an unparalleled degree of hardihood, or at least under the influence of a most extraordinary delusion, ventured to begin a work which the wisdom of our ancestors, ever since we had islands and a

slave peasantry, have most carefully abstained from.

That abuses have long existed, and do still exist, is a point which *now* is not *fairly* before the public. An attack, however, on this ground, has been carefully interwoven with a simpler question, and the consideration of it, however uncalled for, may possibly have answered the intended purpose of misleading the public mind from the real and concealed designs of the African Institution.

That a clandestine Slave Trade (which it is the *professed* object of the Registry Bill to put a stop to) may have existed, in some trifling degree, is very possibly true: the minds of men in ordinary cases are not to be bent in a moment from long-established usages, which old habits of thinking and of acting, and certain notions of self-interest, and repeated Acts of Parliament, had encouraged for successive generations. The practice, in most cases, so naturally follows the operations of the mind, that it could not be surprising if some pettifogging transgressions were to be detected in this case,

though the *improbability* of the existence of such offences, to any obnoxious extent, we could easily demonstrate by a fair and impartial review of the present state of society in the West India Islands.

That a clandestine Slave Trade has, in *point of fact*, been carried on in some of our islands, is positively affirmed without evidence, and as positively denied upon this simple constitutional ground, that conviction has not yet fastened the crime upon a single offender. But if twenty violations of the abolition laws could be made out on the clearest evidence, we should still fix our standard immoveably on a rock, and with true British spirit refuse our assent to the introduction of inquisitorial or extraordinary remedies into these or any other part of His Majesty's dominions* on any pretence whatever.

Let it be assumed, then, as a fact, that offences against the abolition laws have

* Might not the jealous watchfulness of Parliament be properly employed in an inquiry into the power exercised by the servants of the crown over Trinidad, and the other ceded or conquered islands?

actually been committed ; what then ? Is there not already a sufficient *legal* remedy ? Why has Slave Trading been made a *felony*, but that the punishment suitable to felonious acts should be inflicted on the offender ? Have the abolition laws been found, *upon trial*, to be too weak to cope with the daring spirit of the enemies of the abolition ? This is nowhere stated by the advocates of this bill. Still they say the laws are ineffectual, and they reason thus :

“ A law which has already been evaded, may be evaded again ; unless indeed the facility of committing the offence be now lessened, or the means of prevention enlarged. In this case there has been no such favourable change ; on the contrary, the termination of war has opened extensive new facilities to the smugglers, and diminished greatly the preventive powers of the government. Slaves may now be brought from Africa under foreign and friendly flags, with plausible foreign destinations, in such a course as to sweep almost the very shores of our islands. They may also be deposited in foreign colonies,

within three or four hours' sail of our own. On the other hand, we shall, in time of peace, probably not have a quarter of the number of ships of war (those only guardians of our abolition laws in the West Indies) that has hitherto been stationed among our islands, ever since the acts were passed. Besides, the right of search exists only while our flag is belligerent.

"The actual existence of Slave Smuggling, therefore, since that period, would prove, *a fortiori*, its possibility in future. But the converse of the proposition is not true. If such smuggling has not hitherto been carried on, this by no means proves that we have now a sufficient security against it in the laws already passed.

"That African negroes have been illicitly imported into some, *if not all*, of our islands, since the year 1808, and even since the offence was made felony, *there is abundant reason to conclude*.

"Direct information of such practices has been several times transmitted to the friends of the abolition, in England, from different quarters." "Letters and personal commu-

nications from gentlemen of respectability to the Secretary and General Committee of the African Institution, would suffice to remove all doubts of the existence of such offences, *to some extent at least*, if it were not a necessary precaution with that body, to conceal the names of individuals resident in, or connected with, the West Indies, who send them, from humane motives, useful information. The transmission of it might otherwise dangerously expose the authors to popular odium or private resentment in that country."

"As to informers for penalties under the laws of trade, not being officers of the Navy or Custom House, officially bound to make seizures, it is a character of which, perhaps, one specimen only has been found within *thirty years*. *About that time* a man was bold enough to inform in one of the most important and polished of the Leeward Islands (St. Kitt's) in a case of prohibited information. He was immediately seized, tried publicly by a self-constituted court, convicted of the foul offence of being an

informer, and sentenced to tarring and feathering, and perpetual banishment."

"He had the hardihood, nevertheless, in a few months, to return; called on the government for redress; and the Attorney-General was ordered to prosecute the judge of the mock tribunal, and the immediate executioners of the sentence. He did so with much zeal for the honour of government, but to no effect; not a witness but the prosecutor himself could be found to depose to facts which *one-half* of the free population of the islands had seen; and the jury, some of whom could *probably* have confirmed him, as eye-witnesses, chose to disbelieve him, and found a verdict of Not Guilty."

The title of this cause, we are told, in a note, is that of the "King v. Alison." The story may or may not be substantially true, though there may also be some colouring or embellishment given to it in the recital. The case arose in or about the year 1785.

"After such an example" (and after the *short* interval of *thirty* years! *Risum*

teneatis?) “ it will *hardly* be thought that prosecutors are easily found in a West India Island, upon laws so unpopular there as the acts for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

“ There, *nevertheless*, have been seizures, by officers of the customs, of slaves unlawfully imported*.”

Who can doubt that the return of peace will give increased facility to smuggling in every department of trade? This may be a good reason for fitting out additional cruisers, and multiplying the officers of the customs ; but who, in his right senses, would for such a reason insist on the necessity of subverting the whole colonial system? With great deference to the sagacity and sound judgment of these friends of African freedom and of British slavery, we presume to think their unruly zeal is disposed to carry them, in this instance, much beyond the limits of sterling sense. Nor do we conceive the case of the informer, supposing it to be accurately stated, will be thought to

* Reasons for a Registry, p. 21, *et seq.*

give much weight either to their opinions or their reasoning. It is impossible to believe, if we may be allowed to reason gravely on absurdities, that this story could have had the effect of intimidation throughout the *whole* of our West India Islands, many of which have little or no intercourse with each other, and in few of which, most probably, the story was ever known; nor can we suppose it has been remembered, with any of the horrors of a frightful example, even within the precincts of the "*important*" island of St. Kitt's, after an interval of thirty years; during which time, we are led by *our* views of the subject, and by the spirit of true christian charity, to presume, that a favourable change has actually taken place in the state of society and of manners; and that the infamous character of informer has, through the improved respectability of the inhabitants, and not from the terrors of an obsolete example, become positively extinct throughout the whole of the West India Islands.

But it seems that seizures of slaves, unlawfully imported, *have actually been made*.

by officers of the customs. These officers surely are not more exempted from the hazard of tarring and feathering than any other class of informers ; yet they have dared to seize this description of contraband commodities, and have never been molested, as far as we are told, for discharging faithfully the important duties of their office.

Why then are we to force a construction unfavourable to the character of the colonists, or admit that the abolition laws are inefficacious as to their valuable objects ? A short review of these laws will be enough to throw light upon this important department of the subject.

By the 47 Geo. III. c. 36, (commonly called the Slave Trade Abolition Act,) every ship or vessel unlawfully carrying slaves shall be forfeited.

The owner, part owner, freighter, factor, captain, mate, supercargo, or surgeon, shall forfeit and pay for each slave so unlawfully carried away, the sum of 100*l.* sterling money of Great Britain ; one moiety of which to His Majesty, and the other moiety to the informer. These penalties may

be recovered either in the Vice-Admiralty Courts in the West Indies, and elsewhere, or (to prevent the fear of tarring and feathering, and the corrupt verdict of an interested jury) may be prosecuted in the Courts of Record in Great Britain, and the venue laid in the county of Middlesex! By 51 Geo. III. Slave Trading is made a felony, and punished accordingly; and it is therein provided, that if any person shall knowingly enter or embark on board any such ship or vessel, as petty officer, servant, seaman, or shall knowingly underwrite, or cause to be underwritten, he shall not be deemed guilty of felony, but misdemeanor, and be subject to imprisonment for two years.

And this is over and above the penalties given by Act 47, Geo. III. c. 36, which we have above recited.

The severity of these laws one might suppose to be quite sufficient for every possible practical purpose; yet, when the offence is stated to be committed, the legal constitutional means of prosecuting offenders to conviction are despised, and Parlia-

ment is called upon to exercise a most violent and unprecedented *coercive power* ; and that upon the strength of short-sighted inapplicable reasoning, ill-founded calumny, anonymous or secret information, and the good character of the leading Directors of the African Institution ; who, no doubt, are the same *enlightened statesmen*, whose "*obiter dicta*" are to pass as proof of an obligation on the part of Parliament to give the force of law to their speculative undertakings.

We are by no means disposed to give way to such authority. We have a confident belief, that the contraband Slave Trade, if it exist at all, must exist in a very limited degree, and lie quite within the reach of existing regulations.

There is not a single reason produced, as arising from the state of society in the West Indies, which did not exist at the time these laws were made. The only difference between circumstances then and now is, that the manners of those people are since improved, which renders revo-

lation less necessary; and the influence of the African Institution too much increased, which ought to make jealousy more watchful. If these laws, strong as they are in their enactments, should be thought ineffectual for their purposes, let the penalties be doubled, that the colonists may have a sufficient temptation to become informers; let the officers of the customs be increased, and *feloony* be punished *by death*; or let the milder methods, prepared by the ingenuity of Mr. Stephen for the Spanish nation, be more legitimately employed to eradicate the share which any British subject may be hardy enough to take in this abominable traffic.

“If our present squadrons be not numerous enough to perform this service, a small reinforcement will suffice. Though a few of the slave traders might escape the vigilance of our cruisers, so large a proportion would lose, after heavy expenses, the whole object of their voyage, that insurance would become impossible; and the merchants, after a single season or two

at the most, would renounce the desperate game*."

This is the fair, rational, constitutional course of proceeding. Such laws, however severe, come very short of inquisition†; they cannot touch the innocent, and if they touch the guilty, these will fall without commiseration.

The West India Islands are charged, among other things, with raising obstructions in the way of manumission‡. Now

* See Inquiry into the Right and Duty of compelling Spain to relinquish her Slave Trade in Northern Africa, p. 70.

† "Some degree of *inquisitorial* authority might also properly be confided to the Registrar; we mean, that he should be required to take the examination, on oath, of every person alleging himself, or represented to be held in illegal slavery. Perhaps, even a personal inspection, by this officer, of the different slave-gangs in the colony, on a circuit to be made for that purpose, would not be unnecessary nor impracticable."—*Christian Observer*, for January 1816.

‡ The planters are charged, not only with discouraging manumission, but discouraging population. It is curious to observe, into what inconsistencies certain persons are carried by their ungovernable tempers. "In most colonies the revenues raised for parochial or

we have always understood, and still we have no reason to disbelieve, that the laws of which complaint is made as intending to obstruct the progress of emancipation, were merely meant as measures of police, calculated to meet the too common practice of conferring freedom upon slaves, who, from disease or old age, might no longer be fit for labour; and at the same time afford a simple and rational substitute for that code of poor laws, which do no credit to the municipal regulations of this country. In Jamaica, the law * directs

public purposes, are chiefly raised by a poll-tax upon slaves, which attaches on them from the birth to the grave, without any allowance for infancy, or for other disability to labour for the master, either through infirmity or age. The planter, therefore, who has the greatest proportion of native slaves bears the heaviest share of the public burthens."—*Reasons*, &c. p. 39.—Yet, by an Order of Council, dated 17th August, 1815, and published in Trinidad (where the African Institution is known to possess unbounded influence) a tax of two dollars, per head, is laid on every slave without distinction!

* The earliest law to the same effect, of which we can find a trace, was passed in 1774. A law to this effect

that, in all cases of manumission, security shall be given *not in money* (a circumstance which affects the whole feature and character of the transaction), *but in bond* to the churchwardens of the parish, to prevent the person so enfranchised from becoming a charge upon the public ; a regulation not likely, *even in theory*, to obstruct the liberation of *well-conditioned* slaves, nor to produce any worse effect than that intended by the law, namely, that of rescuing the unwilling victim from the miseries of a most unsuitable and merciless sort of emancipation.

We have no access to the laws, nor are we well-informed of the usages, of the Windward and Leeward Islands ; but of Jamaica, which, in extent, in population, in productiveness, and commercial import-

was passed in Barbadoes in the year 1739 ; in Antigua in the year 1761 ; in St. Vincent's in the year 1761 ; in St. Kitt's in the year 1798 : yet, Mr. Stephen, with his usual accuracy, says, " the insular laws which restrain and virtually prohibit manumission, have *all* originated within a very few years !" thereby insinuating, that the Colonial Assemblies have been most diligent in opposing the cause of humanity, while the British Parliament has been most actively employed in promoting it.

ance, is equal to all the other islands put together, and from whence, if from any partial source, might *data* be more fairly drawn than from smaller communities as the bases of *general* regulation, we can speak with confidence. There the penalty of the bond is 100% and the condition required that of the payment of 5% annually, in case of need, to the enfranchised negro. We have heard from good authority, and we believe, that never, but in one instance, has a bond of this description been enforced, and that in a case so evidently influenced by improper feeling as to call forth general disapprobation : such, *in point of practice*, has been the obstruction thrown by the laws of that island in the way of the manumission of slaves.

The Island of Jamaica, if not the whole West India body, has a right to complain of being stabbed in the dark, by mistake or design. A little fair inquiry or dispassionate consideration would have let in light upon the subject, and either have given strength to the reasonings employed to recommend the measure, or prevented

the appeal now made to the wisdom of Parliament to enforce it. No concealment, we trust, could have been deliberately meant; for concealment of truth in such a case assumes nothing less than the character of falsehood. We leave the West India body to give vent to their indignant feelings in their own way, and according to the extent of their wrongs, confining ourselves merely to point out a gross misstatement as a very unfit ground of parliamentary interposition.

The indirect object of this measure is to counteract the imputed narrow policy of the several islands by helping the progress of freedom. Whoever is not registered is to be free, as if freedom *abstractedly* were a blessing. Who will fail to register his active, healthy, intelligent, valuable slave? Surely no person can be expected to commit such an act of negligence or disinterestedness, at least under the operation of this law; but there are many individuals who would gladly seize the opportunity of enfranchising sickly, decrepit, aged, worthless slaves, to escape the expense which,

not the voice of charity but, the laws of the islands have hitherto compelled them to incur for the cloathing and proper maintenance of such poor creatures.

But this is not all. The principal towns, particularly in Jamaica, abound with respectable well-disposed negroes, who, without the *right* to freedom, enjoy all the advantages of it through the partiality and indulgence of their owners. The freedom of these people is perhaps never called in question, except in cases of misconduct, or to aid the valuable purposes of police. This bill, if it pass into a law, will have the effect of calling it, in many cases, into question. It will cut both ways, and be equally the evidence of slavery and of freedom. Many persons will now record their right of property in the slave, whom otherwise they might never think of claiming, some from selfish considerations, some from duty as mortgagors, as tenants for life, &c. and thus may the slave be made to descend in the line of inheritance to the heir, and again be subjected to all the vicissitudes attending the temper, the character,

and circumstances of the owner for the time being, when, without the registry, he might be left gradually to slide into a state of ease, security, and established freedom.

But it seems a registry is necessary because the *colour of the skin* is, *prima facie*, evidence of the condition of the negro; and thus, by the laws of these colonies, the *onus probandi* is thrown upon the *black*, which might be thought, if we were to yield to the authority of this writer, to be nearly as difficult as to wash off the colour of his skin. As the passage is curious, it will find a fit place in this section of our observations:—

“The assemblies have wonderfully improved upon the slave code of all other countries and times. They have absolved the master from the troublesome duty of proving his title. They have reversed the universal presumption of other laws; placing it, not in favour of freedom, but against it. They have cast the burthen of proof on the weakest and helpless party. The English lord, when trying the question of

villeinage with his alleged villein or slave, was obliged even to bring into court the near relations of his opponent to prove the hereditary condition. The West India master need produce only the alleged slave himself. *His condition is recorded on his face.*"—See Reasons for a Slave Registry, p. 58.

His condition, *we* are assured, is enregistered indelibly on the public records of the islands, which records afford the strongest and best evidence that can be produced of the condition of the negro.

Who would not conclude, from the foregoing quotation, that the question of free or not free is constantly agitated in the courts of law, for the barbarous purpose of disturbing the ease and happiness of unoffending characters? That this is not true, no one, we think, who has ever been in the islands, and has witnessed the contentedness of that happy class of persons, can for a moment entertain a doubt. It is most assuredly, however, a fit subject to be fairly inquired into, when doubtful characters step forward to disturb the public

peace, or in any way violate the laws of the country. Are not vagrants in this very metropolis constantly apprehended and sent to the house of correction, till they give a good account of themselves? Is not the *onus probandi*, in these cases, invariably thrown upon them? Are the West India Islands alone to forego the benefit of a strict police? and is the lowest order of persons only to be embraced by this new measure? To every unoffending negro it is useless; to every free man it is unnecessary. His title to freedom stands on the basis of a rock. It stands upon the same security as property in land, as mortgages, leases, wills, marriage settlements, &c. They are all equally enrolled in the books of record; which afford the strongest evidence that can be produced in law. Who, in the face of such conclusive evidence, could be so mad as to attempt to disturb the claim to liberty of any human being?

Not to multiply objections, we have stated enough to point out with what absurdities and culpable inconsideration, to use the mildest terms, the promoters of

this project are chargeable. To say nothing of the absurdity of making laws to prevent a clandestine Slave Trade, which, in point of fact, does not exist, and of the solecism in legislation of making laws to meet offences *in futuro*, which, from the nature of things, as we could easily shew, are not likely to happen, the striking absurdity is at once committed of proposing to begin the work of emancipation at the wrong end. Many of that description of persons, who ought to be made free, will be fixed in a state of slavery ; and many of an opposite description will be enfranchised, to whom freedom will be tantamount to misery, while the *important* reform is accomplished of making the *silence* of the proposed registry, instead of the written document of a public record, the legal evidence in all cases of disputed freedom !

These considerations afford, according to our apprehensions, the strongest possible grounds of objection to the measure ; objection so evident that we should have been surprised at seeing them overlooked, if we had not had occasion more than

once, to observe how much the opinions of this organ of the African Institution are liable to be led astray by the delusions of a very heated imagination ; and if we were not, at the same time, very strongly impressed with a belief of the existence of designs in some directors of that distinguished Association, very distinct from, and very far beyond, the professed and prominent object of their public recommendations.

To us every measure professing to better the condition of the black population of our colonies, invariably excites a peculiar interest, and carries along with it an irresistible charm ; we are instinctively drawn to lend a hand to the cause of humanity and mercy, and ever must feel a severe pang of regret when we are stopped by prudential considerations, or disapprobation of the means employed by our fellow-labourers for the accomplishment of this important object. These should always be *unequivocally* right. No trick, no sophistry, no double meanings can be tolerated in any shape ; these serve only to stag-

ger confidence, to engender suspicion, to chill the warmth of zeal, and disappoint expectation. It is no easy thing to follow this writer through all his windings. We are required to encounter the subtilties without the precision of special pleading. Already have we pointed out a striking instance of misrepresentation in a preceding paragraph. We now proceed with unwilling steps to notice another no less exceptionable passage of this pamphlet, to which we have already made an allusion*.

“As it is impossible suddenly to break their fetters without danger of calamitous consequences, not only to their masters, but themselves, ~~we~~ must suffer them to remain for some considerable period, in their present bondage.” “But who is there so dead to the impulse of human sympathy, who so regardless of the claims of justice and mercy, as not to deplore that cruel necessity, and to desire to give to its duration the narrowest limits that humanity will allow?”

* See p. 83.

“ Here there neither is, nor ever has been any controversy in Parliament since the subject was first brought to its notice. *All* have professed to regard colonial slavery as an evil we were *bound to terminate*, though the nature of the case would not permit us to do so in any but a slowly progressive course.

“ The advocates of the abolition, and *the few who refused to prescribe any term to the Slave Trade*, professed themselves to be as earnest in their desire of reform, by all safe means, and *ultimately to abolish the slavery* of our colonies, as Mr. Wilberforce himself.”

“ The speeches of eminent statesmen, *the writings of the colonial party*, the votes and addresses of Parliament, and the official correspondence of ministers with the colonial governors, might all be appealed to in proof that such has *always* been the unanimity of sentiment on this very interesting head.

“ What are the means then that can be devised for the attainment of a reformation

so dear to the wishes and so necessary to the honour of our country?

“ They can only be of two general kinds ; compulsory and persuasive. Regarding the end as one which *Parliament is bound*, in some way, to attain, it must either be accomplished by direct legislation accompanied with coercive sanctions, or by such parliamentary measures as may incline those, who have the power of ameliorating the lot of the slaves, to engage willingly in that beneficent work.”

There is a sort of mist hanging over this passage, together with the preceding and following paragraphs, which makes it difficult to define the exact meaning of the writer. It however insinuates, that the question of emancipation had already been entertained by Parliament; that Parliament *is bound* sooner or later to accomplish the object by direct or indirect legislative enactments; that *even the friends of slavery* were *equally earnest as Mr. Wilberforce* in their *desire ultimately to abolish the slavery* of our colonies; that the writings of the

colonial party bore testimony of the unanimity of sentiment, on this head; and that *all* professed to regard colonial slavery as an evil which we were *bound* to terminate.

Certainly it was no easy matter to discuss the question of the Slave Trade, without touching *incidentally* on the point of eventual, though very distant, emancipation. But who can say that this point was ever brought before Parliament in a direct tangible shape, or was so received under any form as to leave an *obligation* on Parliament to entertain it at any definite or indefinite period of time?

The abolition of villeinage in this country was the work of centuries. With such a precedent in view, no rational being could ever doubt that the abolition of the Slave Trade would eventually, and in a progressive manner, though not perhaps by the same slow degrees, lead to the abolition of colonial slavery; as little might he doubt that effect would follow its cause, as deny in any shape this almost self-evident proposition. This sentiment must have passed

through the mind of every member of the House of Commons, and of every member of the House of Peers, without perhaps one single exception. But are we thence to infer that Parliament is *bound* to accomplish, or even hasten the effect *by legislative interposition*? If the premises then are insufficient to bear out the inference, where is the vote of the House of Commons or of the House of Peers to be found to establish the proposition that Parliament is *bound* to interference? A simple reference to the rolls of Parliament may be sufficient to corroborate or to falsify this preposterous insinuation.

As to the writers of the colonial party, they could not have failed to see, like all other persons, that the Act for abolishing the Slave Trade would naturally lead, by safe, slow, and almost imperceptible steps, to the *ultimate* abolition of colonial slavery. If their writings are meant to be brought in proof of unanimity of sentiment on this point, the averment admits of no contradiction. If the same writers are pointed to as professing to regard colonial slavery

as an evil which *Parliament* was *bound* to terminate, we are called upon, for want of chapter and page, to oppose a simple denial to the truth of this assertion on the single ground, that no writers could be found sufficiently absurd to commit this act of *felo de se*, or at the best to stultify themselves in the face of the recorded opinions of their more rational opponents.

Let us see what was written, at the time these discussions occupied almost unceasingly the attention of Parliament, by an enlightened, zealous, and practically useful member of the illustrious corps of abolitionists, since become a Director of the African Institution* :—

“ No one is senseless enough to propose that the colonies should be cultivated by Europeans, or that the slaves already settled there should be emancipated.”—*Concise Statement*, &c. p. 42.

“ If this grand reformation (the abolition of the Slave Trade) is once adopted,

* Said to be Mr. Brougham.

there needs *no further interference* with the structure of colonial society, or the concerns of West India proprietors. Every man may now be left to pursue his own interest in his own way. Few will continue so insane as to mal-treat and work out their stock, when they can no longer fill up the blanks occasioned by their cruelty, or their inhuman and short-sighted policy.”—“ In a very few years all the negroes in the West India Islands will be creoles, and all the masters will treat them with indulgence for their own sakes. The enormous expense of new supplies will be entirely saved ; the increase of negroes by breeding will, on each estate, be in proportion to the accumulation of the proprietor’s capital ; the labour of the whole negroes will be much more productive, and will, in some degree, resemble the industry of freemen ; the negro character will be improved ; the manner of the other classes will also be ameliorated ; the non-residence, so much lamented at present, and the want of women, so fatal to the colonial character, will gradually wear out ; the structure of

West Indian society will more and more resemble that of the compact, firm, and respectable communities which compose the North American states."—*Ib.* p. 60.

Let us see again what is now said, we believe, by the same writer. "The emancipation of these unfortunate beings has *never* formed any part of the views entertained by the abolitionists. They have constantly been charged with indulging in such prospects; they have uniformly, peremptorily, and, in the end, successfully, repelled the charge; not that any one, attached to the cause of humanity and justice, ever shut his eyes to the ultimate liberty of the negro race, *as the result of an improved system of management*; or ever saw, without infinite pain, the *impossibility of hastening* so desirable a consummation by *direct legislative interference*."—"A gradual improvement in their condition could alone prepare the way for restoring them to liberty; and this improvement was confidently expected to flow from the abolition of the Slave Trade."—*Edin. Review*, Oct. 1815, p. 317.

These observations, it is true, afford no argument against the *bare* project of registering the slaves ; but it completely falsifies the reasonings and the statements employed to recommend it ; while the train of reflection naturally arising in the mind of the author of the " Concise Statement " presents so simple, so obvious, so well-considered and interesting a description of the certain progress of future improvement in the condition of the negro slaves, and delineates so well the beautiful methods and delicate springs set at work by the Creator of the Universe to perfect his moral works in every part of this sublunary world, that we are irresistibly led to deprecate that stretch of human wisdom, which would attempt, under any pretence, to accomplish his purpose by this unnecessary piece of machinery, which, with all the appearance of simplicity, contains, like Pandora's box, the principles of immeasurable mischief.

If we were called upon to name the time when improvement in the internal affairs of our colonies is most likely to take a start, we

should immediately and confidently name the present moment, when the well-grounded hope, or the actual possession of wealth by the master, will naturally cause a re-action upon the comfort and personal condition of the slave. What mortgagor has not some faithful servant whom he would be glad, if he had the liberty, to remunerate by the blessings of enfranchisement for valuable services? How many humane individuals are there, whose "poverty, not whose will, consents" to keep some deserving negro in a state of bondage? Independent of subordinate considerations, the growth of freedom is thus obviously an effect, which, if it be not impeded by the overflowing zeal and superabundant light of its most conspicuous, though not its most rational advocates, must naturally follow the growth of prosperity and fortune. It is easy to perceive what important advantages will almost unavoidably be conferred on this interesting class of human beings by the undisturbed operation of this simple cause. Will not moral, religious, and intellectual improvement immediately follow, if they

do not precede, this movement in the progressive change? Will not these again have an influence collaterally upon others, and thus prepare them, in their turn, for admission to a new condition, which, under present circumstances, they might not be qualified to partake of?

If, on the other hand, we were called upon to state the most powerfully counteracting causes, we should not hesitate, among others, to place foremost this most daring conspiracy, if it ever become ripened into the shape of law, against the constitutional privileges of the West India Islands; under the security of which crowds of valuable subjects have embarked their lives, their families, their properties, their all. It appears to us to be nothing less than an act of perfidy. It is in direct opposition to the professions held out by the abolitionists during the whole progress of the discussions in Parliament on the important subject of the Slave Trade. It must stagger all confidence. Who will toil on to raise or to preserve a valuable inheritance for his children, if the fruits of his labour

are to be exposed to danger at the moment of expected enjoyment? Will he not immediately recur to the old, and, we should hope, nearly exploded, system of making large crops upon terms only exceptionable on the ground of wear and tear of capital? Is it possible that this measure can fail to exasperate the mind of the colonist to the highest pitch of indignation? and will exasperation and the influence of avarice united in the mind of the master have a tendency to better the condition of the slave?

We could carry on this train of reflection to an indefinite length, but we have already said enough to shew the extreme folly and absurdity, not to say practical wickedness, of this project: of which the principle and the probable operation stand at variance with each other, and of which the immediate effect will be to obstruct the very best avenues for promoting the substantial happiness, and the lasting benefit of the negro population in the British colonies.

From beginning to end of this pamphlet

there is nothing like fair play. If atrocities are committed in one little island, the reproach, justly attaching to such atrocious acts, is most unjustly fastened upon the whole West India body ; the exception is industriously swollen into all the importance of the rule, and a thesis taken for the most ill-founded, not to say defamatory, declaration. A law is passed in one or more islands, by which every person manumitting a slave is required to pay a certain sum of money to secure the future maintenance of such slave. This law may be founded on good, or on doubtful, or even on bad principles of legislation. Such, however, as it is, it has been discussed in the colonial assemblies, has been approved of by the Governor, and ratified by the King in council. We cannot at this distance undertake to answer for the motives of the framers of such laws in the different islands, no more than we would for the motives of those who undertake to condemn them here ; but we have stated that in Jamaica, it is in practice a well-judged, benevolent measure of police. No inquiry

is made, by this writer, whether the security is given in money or in bond ; the *object* of *all* these laws is broadly stated to be, *wilful impediment in the way of manumissions* ; and immediately a violent *tirade* is levelled against the whole of the colonial assemblies without any discrimination whatever. To pass over a great deal of rank abuse, one unvaried tone of harshness is observable throughout ; every idea is tortured to swell the current of popular odium against the system condemned, as if victory, and not the discovery of truth, were the object aimed at ; nowhere is a guarded expression to be found to leave room for a possible inference that, with returning prosperity to the planter, some advantages may have accrued to the slave, some increase of kindness, more attention to his ease and comfort both in cloathing and subsistence, some relaxation in point of labour, some modification of the severer parts of plantation duty, and above all an almost entire exemption from the operation of that disgraceful law which directs slaves, in case of failure of other personal effects,

to be taken up and sold under legal process for the payment of debts and taxes*.

To say that no changes have taken place, that improvement in the condition of slaves has not *latterly* being gradually going forward, particularly in the island of Jamaica, is positively *false*, and must be known to be false by every person who has taken pains to ascertain the real state of things from unprejudiced authority. That improvements have not kept pace with the spirit of the times is a *truism*, which no fair observer can conscientiously deny, and which must be equally the subject of regret

* We are credibly informed, that, in Jamaica, it is now become a rare occurrence to see slaves, thus levied on, exposed to sale; an indisputable proof of the growing prosperity of the planter, and, in one most important particular, of a corresponding amelioration in the condition of the slave. What effect may be partially produced by the dreadful calamity lately inflicted on this island, we need not undertake to say; but we can easily understand that a grant of money, afforded by Parliament to the unfortunate sufferers, would produce a more salutary effect towards the comfort and condition of a large body of slaves than is likely to be worked out by the present or future labours of the African Institution.

to every genuine philanthropist, and to every denomination and sect of christians.

But though it may be a subject of regret, it cannot altogether be that of surprise. It is now nearly eight years since the law for abolishing the Slave Trade was carried into complete effect. During the first four years of that time, the restrictions, put by Bonaparte upon the trade for colonial produce, had reduced the West India planters to a state bordering upon ruin. During the remaining four years indeed the sugar distillery bill and the return of peace to Europe, had gilded his prospects, and disclosed the dawn of more prosperous fortunes. Yet even here some check has been experienced ; for in the course of these years, Jamaica had been visited by an hurricane; St. Vincent, and Barbadoes, in different ways, by an eruption from a volcano, and the whole of the islands, more or less, by famine, following the steps of the American war ; for which the slave and the slave-holder may with reason think he is indebted to the ready pen of the author of " War in Disguise," and of the " Reasons

for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies."

The clandestine Slave Trade, we have said, is a mere pretence; and the Slave Registry Bill, if it pass into a law, is intended to be made a stepping-stone for ulterior measures of the African Institution and Church Missionary Society. Else why attack the colonial assemblies for not passing laws to attach the negroes to the soil; for not repealing certain laws which direct the slave to be sold for the debts of the master: for "opposing positive prohibitions to *the only attainable means of religious instruction and worship*," namely, *by missionary preachers*? However important these points may be, as questions of colonial regulation, what have they to do with the Slave Registry Bill? or how can they be tortured into reasons for establishing a registry of slaves in the British colonies? The first lies, in some degree, within the reach of certain established authorities in this country; the second, we trust, will soon become obsolete through disuse; and the last is distinctly within the ecclesiasti-

cal jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. The most important of these objects might be accomplished without encroaching upon a single constitutional right, or claim to right, of any of the islands. But—this is not enough, nor would it suit the views of the leading Directors of the African Institution. A precedent must be established by Act of Parliament for interfering in the internal regulations of these islands; the colonial system must be subverted; and the way laid open for the future enterprises of these theologico-political associations.

There is a set of people in this country who, possessed of an unbounded good opinion of themselves, conceive that nothing can be wrong which they think or do, and nothing can be right which is thought or done by others. Pretending to be the advocates of universal toleration, they are themselves most intolerant; with them proselytism is a fixed principle of duty; for this there are no lengths to which they will not go; with unceasing perseverance, and not very scrupulous as to means, they are daily adding to the number and power of

their sect; we find them meddling with the concerns of the cabinets of kings, and establishing their influence by disturbing the tranquillity of private life. To hear these persons talk, one might be led to suppose that benevolence and commiseration for the sufferings of others dwelt exclusively with them; yet in the same breath they preach up mercy towards the sable sons of Africa, and give the signal to "let loose the dogs of war" against the fairest regions of Europe. Tracing the successful progress of their schemes to the operation of *influences*, which lies beyond the comprehension of common understandings, they treat with contempt, and trample without mercy on, the dearest interests of those who happen to hold opposite opinions to their own. Whatever their ultimate object may be, it rivets their whole attention; no prudential considerations interpose to check, no experience can instruct, no warning voice can reach them. Always incroaching by day-light and by stealth, where, we would ask, do they mean to stop?—We have no hesitation to say that, without they

are stopped by the wisdom of Parliament at this point, they never will stop, until they have raised Barbarism on the wreck of civilized life in the West India Islands, and Fanaticism upon that of the established Hierarchy of the British Empire.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

" CITY AND PARISH OF KINGSTON.

" AN ORDINANCE FOR PREVENTING THE PROFANATION OF RELIGIOUS RITES AND FALSE WORSHIPING OF GOD, UNDER THE PRETENCE OF PREACHING AND TEACHING, BY ILLITERATE, IGNORANT, AND ILL-DISPOSED PERSONS, AND OF THE MISCHIEFS CONSEQUENT THEREUPON.

" WHEREAS it is not only highly incumbent upon, but the first and most serious duty of all magistrates and bodies politic, to uphold and encourage the due, proper, and solemn exercise of religion and worshipping of God : and whereas nothing can tend more to bring true devotion and the practice of real religion into disrepute, than the pretended preaching, teaching, and expounding the word of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, by uneducated, illiterate, and ignorant persons, and false enthusiasts : and whereas the practice of such pretended preaching, teaching, and expounding the Holy Scriptures, by such descriptions of persons as aforesaid, to large numbers of persons of colour and negroes, both of free condition and slaves, assembled together in houses, negro-houses, huts, and the yards thereunto appertaining, and also in divers lanes and bye-places within this

city and parish, hath increased to an alarming degree; and during such pretended preaching, teaching, and expounding, and pretended worshipping of God, divers indecent and unseemly noises, gesticulations, and behaviour, often are used and take place, to the great annoyance of the neighbours, and to the disrepute of religion itself, and also to the great detriment of slaves, who are induced, by divers artifices and pretences of the said pretended preachers, to attend the said irregular assemblies, whereby such slaves are continually kept and detained from their owner's necessary business and employ, and in some cases the minds of slaves have been so operated upon and affected, by the fanaticism of the aforesaid description of persons, as to become actually deranged. Be it therefore enacted," &c.

" PRESENT STATE OF THE JAMAICA MISSION.

"The work of God continues to prosper in this island, notwithstanding the opposition which it meets with from some persons who are high in authority.

"Mr. Davies, one of our Missionaries, arrived at Kingston on the 1st of May, 1814, and found himself surrounded by a numerous and affectionate people; who rejoiced at the prospect of having the doors of the Lord's house once more opened for their reception, after having been shut, by a persecuting act of the Assembly, nearly seven years. The strong conviction which he felt that the Lord had called him to the work of a missionary, in this part of the world, removed every doubt from his mind, respecting the ultimate success of his endeavours to open the house of prayer.

“ Without delay he waited on the mayor of Kingston, and other magistrates, and indeed on most of the members of the corporate body; many of whom received him with politeness, though very few at that time would promise him their support. One gentleman, however, kindly undertook to present a petition, which he had drawn up, to the corporate body. On the 9th of May, Mr. Davies waited on their Honours at the Court-house, where there were only three gentlemen who were decidedly against him; the rest were willing to have a fair discussion on his case. But as it was hinted that some terms in his petition were ambiguous, he was requested to present one in another form, which would be more full and explanatory. The 13th was observed, by our friends, as a day of fasting and prayer, to entreat the Lord to look upon the afflicted state of the church in Jamaica, and particularly in Kingston, where the ministry of the word had been so long suspended. On the 16th, Mr. Davies presented a petition, to which none of the gentlemen objected; and it was agreed that his documents should be transcribed into the journals of the court. On the 17th, he applied to the quarter sessions for permission to take and subscribe the usual oaths. There were five sitting magistrates at the sessions, three of whom favouring his designs, leave was granted. The intelligence of this gave joy to thousands who were hungering for the word of life, and anticipating that day when they should say to one another, ‘ Let us go to the house of the Lord.’ The chapel in Kingston, being immediately put in repair, at a considerable expense, was once more opened for divine worship. This great blessing, however, was but for a moment.

Mr. Davies has been suddenly called to an early reward ; and, by this awful and mysterious providence, our chapel is once more shut up, no other person being licensed for this place by the Assembly ; our dear people are again deprived of the public worship of God. But we must not despair. The hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord ; and while we use prudential means, and put our trust in him, we may reasonably hope for ultimate success. We have three Missionaries with 1937 members in this Island. Mr. Davies observes, and it is with pleasure we record it, that Brother Wiggins, one of your Missionaries, had borne the burthen and heat of the day, and had proved himself to be a faithful, disinterested Minister of Christ.

“ Beside these Missions in the West India Islands, the Methodists have established others in St. Bartholomew's, Barbadoes, Grenada, Trinidad, and the Bahama Islands ; but those of which we have given some details are of the greatest importance.” See Missionary Register, Vol. 3, p. 633.

(B.)

**RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE AFRICAN
INSTITUTION.**

" 1. THE sole management of the affairs of the Institution shall be vested in a Patron and President, twenty Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, and a Board of thirty-six Directors, to be chosen from among the Governors of the Institution, five of whom shall be a quorum.

" 2. The Directors to be annually elected, but that the six Directors who shall have attended the smallest number of times during the preceding year, be not eligible to be re-elected until the subsequent Annual Meeting. The names of such of the Directors as are eligible to be re-elected for the ensuing year to be reported to the General Meeting, and the eligibility of such Directors as may have attended an equal number of Meetings to be decided by lot.

" 3. The Patron and President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer, are *ex officio* Directors; but for the more regular and systematic administration of the affairs of the Institution, a Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be chosen by the Directors from their own body, one of whom, if present, shall preside at all meetings of the Board.

" 4. The Directors shall be empowered to hire or purchase a house or office, and to appoint Officers for conducting the affairs of the Institution; to call General Meetings of the Subscribers; to divide themselves into Committees for the more convenient dispatch of business; to form local Committees for promoting subscriptions, and for other purposes connected with the welfare of the Institution; and generally to frame such By-

laws not consistent with the fundamental rules of the Society, as shall appear to them to be necessary for the due administration of its concerns."

According to the Rules of the African Institution, as stated above, the Directors are to be annually elected; but the six Directors who shall have attended the smallest number of times during the preceding year are not eligible to be re-elected until the subsequent Annual Meeting.

Of the eighteen Directors of the Sierra Leone Company enumerated in the Special Report, *one* besides Mr. Clarkson had quitted London, and Mr. Elliot was dead at the time of the formation of the African Institution. Of the remaining sixteen, *eight*, including Mr. Clarkson, were incorporated with the late Governor Macaulay into the body of Directors of the African Institution.

Lord Teignmouth and Mr. Wilberforce became Vice-Presidents, and as such were immoveable; the remainder might or might not be removed under the Rules of the Institution.

Of the thirty-eight Directors first chosen, *eighteen*, up to the 8th Report, inclusive, have never been out of office for a single year, with the exception of Mr. Grant, who was out of office for the short interval of two years. And of these eighteen, *nine*, namely, those enumerated in the Special Report, had been the efficient Directors of the Sierra Leone Company; and, if we reckon on influence of zeal, activity, and pre-eminent talent, may now, with the addition of Mr. Stephen, and one or two more, be fairly denominated, "The leading Directors of the African Institution."

We give a list of the efficient members of each Establishment, according to our analysis, that the reader may take a bird's-eye view of our reasonings on this subject, and decide whether we have fairly pointed out what persons have been the very soul, and moving power, and virtual representatives of each establishment.

Sierra Leone Company. African Institution.

HENRY THORNTON.
CHARLES GRANT.
LORD TEIGNMOUTH.
W. WILBERFORCE.
THOMAS BABINGTON.
THOMAS F. FORSTER.
GRANVILLE SHARPE.
THOMAS CLARKSON.
Z. MACAULAY, (late Gov.)

HENRY THORNTON.
CHARLES GRANT.
LORD TEIGNMOUTH.
W. WILBERFORCE.
THOMAS BABINGTON.
THOMAS F. FORSTER.
GRANVILLE SHARPE.
THOMAS CLARKSON.
Z. MACAULAY.

PHILIP SANSON.
JOSEPH HARDCASTLE.
JOHN INGLIS.
JOHN KINGSTON.
SAMUEL PARKER.
E. PARRY.
JOHN PRINSEP.

JAMES STEPHEN.
W. ALLEN.
ROBERT BARCLAY.
THOMAS BERNARD.
WILBR. BOOTLE.
HENRY BROUGHAM.
GEORGE HARRISON.
MATTHEW MARSTON.
W. SMITH.
JAMES TOWERS.
JAMES RICE WILLIAMS.

FINIS.